DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 126 702 FL 007 768

AUTHOR	McKay, Maryann
TITLE	Spoken Spanish of Mexican American Children: A Monolingual and Bilingual School Program. CATESOL Occasional Papers, No. 2.
INSTITUTION	California Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.
PUB DATE	75
NOTE	3p.; For related documents, see FL 005 898 and FL 007 767-771
AVAILABLE FROM	K. Sutherland, 558 7th Ave., Menlo Park, California 94025 ($2.00 per issue)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Bilingual Education; *Bilingual Students; English (Second Language); Language Development; Language Instruction; Language of Instruction; Language Proficiency; Mexican Americans; Oral Communication; Second Language Learning; *Spanish; *Syntax

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to test the effects of bilingual and monolingual school on the production of Spanish syntactic structures. The main hypothesis to be tested was that there was no significant difference in the development of Spanish syntactic structures between those children schooled bilingually and those children schooled monolingually in English. If such a difference existed, the children in the bilingual program should demonstrate greater syntactic development in their speech. The study was conducted using ninety-six Mexican-American children in two elementary schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. All of the children were Spanish-dominant and spoke Spanish at home, but also spoke some English. One school had a bilingual program and half of the children attended it. They were matched with forty-eight children who attended the second school which was located nearby and taught the standard curriculum in English. The children viewed a silent movie and discussed it individually with an interviewer. The interview was recorded and transcripts were made of the children's oral language production. One of the most interesting findings of this investigation was that the children in the monolingual school produced more language and more structurally complex language than did the children in the bilingual program. The bilingually schooled children did not perform significantly better than their counterparts on any of the eleven dependent measures. (Author/CLK)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY CATESOL

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

ED126702

SPOKEN SPANISH OF MEXICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN: A MONOLINGUAL AND BILINGUAL SCHOOL PROGRAM

Maryann McKay
Stanford University

One of the main goals of bilingual education is to maintain and develop the mother tongue (i.e., Spanish in the case of the Mexican American in the Southwest). Yet, little has been done to see to what extent bilingual schooling is affecting the development of Spanish.

The purpose of this study was to test the effects of bilingual and monolingual school (Treatment) on the production of Spanish syntactic structures. The main hypothesis to be tested was that there was no significant difference in the development of Spanish syntactic structures between those children schooled bilingually and those children schooled monolingually in English. If such a difference existed, the children in the bilingual program should demonstrate greater syntactic development in their speech.

The study was conducted using ninety-six Mexican American children in two elementary schools in the San Francisco Bay Area. All of the children were Spanish-dominant and spoke Spanish at home, but also spoke some English. One school had a bilingual program and half of the children attended it. They were matched with forty-eight children who attended the second school which was located nearby and taught the standard curriculum in English.

All the children viewed a short movie without sound and talked about it afterwards individually with an Interviewer. The interview was recorded and transcripts were made of the children's oral language production. An analysis of the transcripts was made based on the T-unit. (A T-unit is defined as one main clause plus any subordinate clause or nonclausal structure attached to it.)

In addition to the effects of Treatment, the effects of two other potential sources of variability (which were not central to this study, but which may affect language production) were studied; namely: Sex and Interviewer.

One of the most interesting findings of this investigation was that the children in the monolingual school produced more language and more structurally complex language than did the children in the bilingual program. When a mixed factorial ANOVA with Treatment, Sex, Interviewer, and Grade as between-subject factors and repeated measures as a within-subject factor was run, it was found that monolingually-schooled children performed significantly better on those measures of complex language development such as Complete T-unit, Complex T-unit, Dependent Clauses, and Adjective Clauses. The bilingually-schooled children did not perform significantly better than their counterparts on any of the eleven dependent measures.

FL007768

Individual differences on the Interviewers' ability to elicit language from the children were statistically significant. The reason why they varied is difficult to explain. A careful examination of the transcripts does not reveal that Interviewers spoke differently from one interview to another.

In this study one dependent measure was significantly affected by Sex. Girls performed significantly better on the quantitative measure Mean Number of Words per T-unit.

The number of years in school was not significant for either group when looking at T-unit measures. However, when coordination and subordination were considered, growth over grade was apparent. The number of subordinate clauses increased, with adverbial clauses of time and reason evincing the most growth. The use of the coordinator y increased, thus indicating that children in succeeding years produce more sentences.

The most plausible interpretation of the findings is that Spanish is apparently a school subject to the children in the bilingual program. These children speak a dialect of Spanish at home, and yet, they come to school and are taught in standard Spanish and corrected if they do not use it. This seems to be causing their verbal fluency in Spanish to diminish.